

BIRDS OF THE BAY



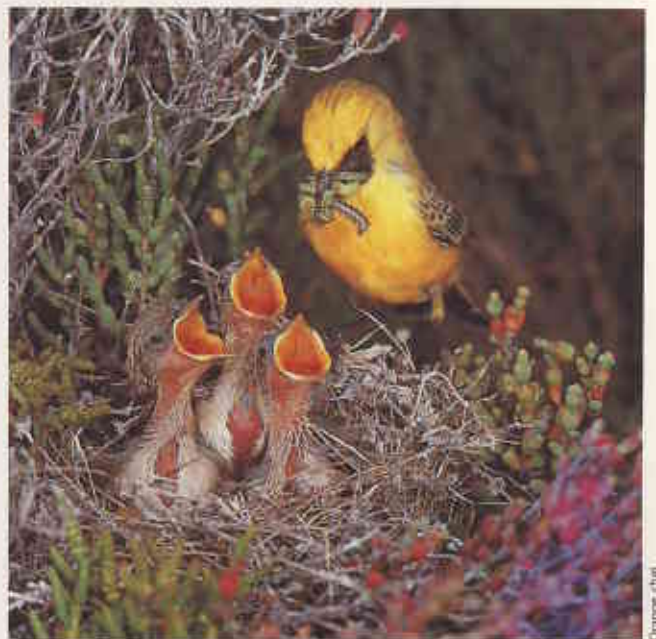
Purple swamphen



Yellow-billed spoonbill



Rainbow lorikeet



Orange chat

*Photos by Michael Morcombe
Text by Allan Burbidge*



In Shark Bay, birds from the south-west intermingle with those from the arid and semi-arid areas, and there is a wealth of waterbirds. Over 230 species are known from the area.

The yellow robin, golden whistler, blue-breasted fairy-wren and brown-

headed honeyeater are south-western species found at their northern limit on the southern edge of Shark Bay. Birds of the arid and semi-arid areas include the wedgebill, southern whiteface, orange and crimson chats and spiny-cheeked honeyeater, which tend to be

more common to the east and on Peron Peninsula.

The Peninsula is a good area for birdwatching. One can often hear wedgebills continually calling 'did you get drunk', and the really lucky observer may glimpse the rare thick-billed



Red-capped plover



Common Chit



Callered sparrowhawk



Red-tailed blackbird chick

grasswren. The northern part of the Peninsula contains some of the most extensive stands of mangroves in the southern half of the State. The mangrove heron, mangrove grey fantail and yellow white-eye, all of which are found at their southern limit in

Shark Bay, live in and around the mangroves.

Various marine birds inhabit this area and several, including the wedge-tailed shearwater, the silver and Pacific gulls, and four different species of terns, breed on small islands in and near

Freycinet Estuary. Waterbirds and shorebirds - great cormorants, pelicans, yellowbilled spoonbills, red-capped plovers and greenshanks - can be seen in several places. However, many of these species avoid Hamelin Pool because it is too saline.

Spry-cheeked honeyeater



Pink cockatoo

Crested tern



Southern whiteface



Variegated fairy-wren

LANDSCOPE

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When European scientists first set foot on our shores they found a bewildering array of animals and plants. Péron the Explorer takes an intimate look at the French scientist whose name lives in Western Australia's newest national park. See page 20.



This tour of the Gascoyne's desert coast guides you through Shark Bay and WA's newest national park. See page 10.



Close to where the fictional Gulliver is believed to have been shipwrecked lives one of the world's oldest organisms. Lilliput's Castles, on page 34, describes the creatures and the ecosystem they have built.



Seagrass covers 3 700 square kilometres of the ocean floor around Shark Bay. Grasses of the Sea, on page 42, takes us on a journey through these underwater meadows.



At first glance, Shark Bay is dry, arid and inhospitable. But if you look more closely you discover its Hidden Treasures. See page 16.

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COVER

Green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), the commonest turtles found along our coast, begin to congregate in the waters of Shark Bay from the end of July. The Bay is the southernmost nesting area for these long-lived animals. During summer, female green turtles lay their eggs on the white sandy beaches of Bernier, Dorre and Dirk Hartog Islands, and occasionally at the northern tip of Peron Peninsula. Illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky.



Managing Editor: Ron Kawalilak

Editor: Ray Bailey

Contributing Editors: Verna Costello, David Gough, Tanyia Maxted and Carolyn Thomson

Design: Sue Marais, Stacey Strickland

Finished art: Sandra Mitchell

Advertising: Estelle de San Miguel ☎ (09) 389 8644 Fax: 389 8296

Illustration: Ian Dickinson, Sandra Mitchell and Stacey Strickland

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